

Manuel Protestant Episcopal Church  
Southeast corner North and Allegheny Streets  
Pittsburgh  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-426

HABS  
PA  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-426

## EMMANUEL PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HABS

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Address: Southeast corner of North and Allegheny Streets, 18-  
Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner  
and Occupant: The Emmanuel Parish

Present Use: Church

Brief Statement  
of Significance: Very small, more simple and subtle than other  
work of the period by H. H. Richardson, the church  
is nevertheless one of his finest later works in  
the Romanesque style

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: The Emmanuel Parish acquired the corner property in 1882 and the church building was completed in 1886. The parish is still active under the same ownership.
- B. Date of Erection: 1884-1886
- C. Architect: H. H. Richardson
- D. Builder: Henry Shenk
- E. Notes on original plan and construction of building: The original plans submitted by H. H. Richardson were for a stone building, approximately the same size as the present church, but designed using the central-tower theme (similar to the Trinity Church in Boston). The estimate of \$48,000 was found to be too high and the plans were rejected by the congregation. A new budget of \$12,000 was presented and plans for the smaller brick church were submitted and approved.
- F. Notes on known alterations and additions:
  - 1887 - Frank E. Alden (firm of Alden and Harlow) was hired as consultant for resolving the problem of the leaning west wall of the church. The firm is also credited with having designed the parish house, located at the southwest corner of the church and designed in the same general style as the Richardson building.
  - 1898 - The marble reredos in the chancel with the Byzantine and Quattrocento detailing was designed by the Pittsburgh firm Lake and Green as a memorial to William Thaw.

G. Sources of information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:  
Richardson, H. H. Sketches at Harvard Houghton Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.  
Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church, Vestry Minutes, Vol. I.
2. Secondary and published sources:  
Hitchcock, Henry Russell. The Architecture of H. H. Richardson. Museum of Modern Art, 1936.  
Van Trump, James D. "Cabin to Cathedral," Charette Vol. 41, no. 9 (September 1961), p. 7.  
Van Trump, James D. "The Church Beyond Fashion," Charette XXXVIII, no. 4 (April 1958), pp. 26-29.  
Van Trump, James D. "The Romanesque Revival in Pittsburgh," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XVI, no. 3 (October 1957).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Represents one of the finest later works of H. H. Richardson. Of special interest is the relatively simple design given vitality by the delicate brick detailing and the handsome laminated truss system.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: 49'-4" x 100'-0", one story, simple rectangle with semicircular apse at one end.
2. Wall construction: Red brick with various patterns - richest being on the gable end, semicircular apse continues the line of the exterior walls at the other end of the building. Battered bases continue the line of the roof slope. Bands of vertical brick (soldier's course) run across at the top and bottom of the windows, and the bricks at the edge of the gables are at right angles to the slope.
3. Structural system: Brick bearing wall construction - gable nave roof framed with timber trusses placed 20'-2" on center (constructed of a 12" x 20" ridge pole, 10" x 14" purlins, 10" x 12" upper chord, and a 10" x 12" laminated lower chord which is semicircular in form, 22'-8" in radius with springing line 3'-6" above the finished floor).

4. Stoops: Three stone steps at entrance (gable end) - four risers at 6" and three treads at 1'-2" - lead to open narthex with balcony over.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Entrance facade is high plain gable (north elevation), completely unadorned except for the patterned brickwork. Three low wide arches (the center being the larger) with imposts and plinths of rock-faced blocks of brownstone--broad archivolts of five bands of brick voisoirs are flush with the building plane. Large arched wood double doors painted red with large elaborate black iron hinges.
  - b. Windows: North elevation, three arched lights (Tiffany glass) above entrance doors, taller in proportion than the entrance arches, with brick banded voisoirs. Slot window in center of third level with flat brick arch. South elevation, three arched lights at center of the semicircular apse with banded brick voisoirs. East and west elevations, three groups of three arched windows (banded brick voisoirs), one arched window at front. Wood two-light casement sash with fixed arched light above - Romanesque stained glass. Wood single light curved triangular sash in the dormers - Romanesque stained glass.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Steep gable with ridge running north and south. Slate covered with molded copper ridge plate. The steep roof descends to relatively low side walls.
  - b. Cornice: Three-course corbel at the eaves; wood ovolo and cavetto cornice molding extends around the sides and apse of the building.
  - c. Dormers: Three low slate-covered pedimented dormers about one-third up the gable roof on the east and west elevations.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Small, rectangular in plan with a center aisle. Semicircular apse at the south end of the building, partially cut off from the nave by banks of organ pipes at either side. Narrow rectangular open narthex at north end (open on the north with a small enclosed stair on the west wall). Dimensions: Narthex, 10'-0" x 44'-8"; nave, 60'-6" x 44'-8"; apse, 22'-4" radius.
2. Stairways: Small enclosed winder stair from the narthex to the balcony - located on the west wall of the narthex.
3. Flooring: Modern vinyl tile in the nave. Marble flooring in the chancel.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Marble reredos with bands of Cosmatesque mosaic in chancel. In nave, random width beaded board wainscoting with chair rail - plaster above, painted pink, up to heavily molded wood cornice. Exposed truss and roof structure above.
5. Doorways and doors: Three arched doorways at north end of church with plain recessed wood architraves. Plain five-paneled door leads to the parish house at the southwest corner of nave.
6. Decorative features and trim: White marble and Cosmatesque mosaic work on the reredos and altar. Romanesque stained glass in the side windows and Tiffany glass in the triple lights in the entrance gable. Handsome exposed wood-truss system.
7. Lighting: Modern fixtures.
8. Heating: Central hot-water system, radiators along outside walls.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: Situated on the southeast corner of North and Allegheny Streets. Surrounding neighborhood consists of generally low-income residential and commercial structures.
2. Outbuildings: Parish house adjacent to the church on the southeast side with access from North Street through a gate and small courtyard. Small utility building adjacent to church at northwest corner.
3. Walks: Brick sidewalk laid in herringbone pattern, on north, south, and west sides. Brick alley at rear (south) of building.

Prepared by John D. Milner, Architect  
National Park Service  
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